



JACK DOYLE

MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

For Immediate Release:
Monday, February 4, 2002

DOYLE ANNOUNCES LILAC FESTIVAL SCHEDULE FOR NEXT TEN YEARS

Monroe County Executive Jack Doyle today announced that the scheduled dates of the annual Lilac Festival in Highland Park have been moved up one week for the next 10 years.

“We’re moving the dates of this annual event up one week in order to maximize the opportunity for Lilac Festival visitors to enjoy Highland Park’s historic Lilac collection while it is in full bloom,” said Doyle. “The decision to change the dates should serve to preserve the success of the 104 year old event that has become so popular to residents and visitors alike.”

The Lilac Festival started informally in 1898 when 3,000 people gathered one Sunday in May to see the lilacs. Ten years later, the number had grown to 25,000 and the event became known as Lilac Sundays. Today, the 1,200 plus flowering lilac bushes in Highland Park put on their display for well over a half-million people during the annual 10-day Lilac Festival.

REVISED LILAC FESTIVAL DATES

- 2002 May 10-19
- 2003 May 9-18
- 2004 May 14-23
- 2005 May 13-22
- 2006 May 12-21
- 2007 May 11-20
- 2008 May 9-18
- 2009 May 8-17
- 2010 May 14-23

- MORE -

WHY CHANGE THE DATES?

An analysis of weather trends over the past few years revealed an early blooming of the lilacs according to county horticulturists and local meteorologists. The festivals governing body, Lilac Festival Inc., voted in favor of changing the festival dates in response to the weather analysis. Lilac Festival Inc. is comprised of the County of Monroe, City of Rochester and Greater Rochester Visitor's Association.

The warm spring temperatures arrive slightly earlier over the years and that means a difference for the flowers, according to Monroe County Parks Department horticulturists. There are never guarantees as to what a Rochester spring will bring, but, with these scheduled changes, visitors may see the lilacs in the bud as well as full bloom.

While a few warmer days in mid-winter have little to no effect on the blooming pace of the lilacs, late April and early May are critical, according to Park horticulturists. A few consecutive days of cold weather will slow down the blooms; while a few hot days will force the buds to pop. Because of the short duration of a lilac in full bloom, typically one to two weeks, the dates for the festival can be critical in determining whether visitors see or miss seeing the blooms.

The Lilac Festival traditionally kicks off the official tourism season in the area, according to Dennis Buchan, president of Lilac Festival, Inc. and chair of the GRVA board. "It's important that the Lilac Festival dates are known well in advance," Buchan said. "Tour operators need to make plans and we would like to think that area residents, businesses and museums might plan events around the festival as well."

For additional information about the Lilac Festival, please visit www.lilacfestival.com.

###

*For further information, call:
Communications and Special Events, 428-2380
See us on the Web at www.monroecounty.gov*